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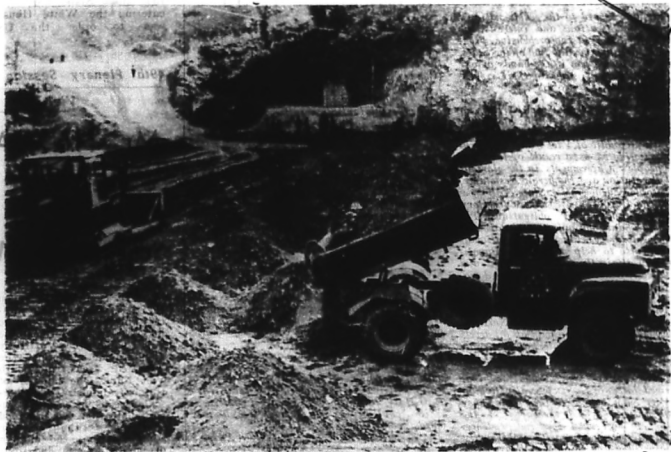
A NEW ELEMENT IN NORTH V. FOOD CROP CULTIVATION

Agronomist BUI HUY DAP
Director, Agronomic Institute

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MAR 23 1970

Hydraulic works
under way in
Huu Lung district,
Lang Son province.



South Viet Nam

○ IN ONE NIGHT (JAN. 3)
6 SUB-SECTOR CPs AND 70
MILITARY POSTS IN MY THO
PROVINCE STORMED.

○ In Breaches of the Christmas
Truce, 4 Puppet Companies Wiped
Out or Decimated in Tay Ninh
and Tra Vinh Provinces.

○ More Than 160 Enemy Troops
Knocked Out in Saigon and Peri-
phery.

○ PLAF Attacks Stepped Up in
Da Nang Region since January 6.

NIXON'S FIRST YEAR IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND VIET NAM

ON January 20, 1969, the Nixon team took over from the Johnson team at the White House. Since 1968 the Viet Nam war had entered a new phase, that of the general offensives and uprisings of South Vietnamese patriotic forces. It was generally felt in the United States that an American victory was no longer possible and that the war was becoming a real cancer that eroded the political, economic and social fabric of the country and its international position as well. A shrewd politician, Nixon had won the presidential elections with a pledge to quickly end the costly and unpopular war.

"VIETNAMIZATION"
OFF TO AN UNPROMISING START

HOWEVER, once elected President, he acted very differently, and his Defence Secretary Melvin Laird, back from a Viet Nam tour, lick-

ed into shape the new military strategy initiated by the previous administration. This strategy, which made an intensive use of tanks, armoured vehicles, helicopters and artillery, was undisguisedly defensive with its numerous belts of defence in depth around US puppet military bases. A basic official policy called "Vietnamization" — another name for Johnson's "de-Americanization" — was also elaborated.

Thus, instead of terminating the war as he had promised, Nixon merely wanted to prolong it by other means. That was only "to change the color of the corpses", as his Ambassador to Saigon Elsworth Bunker put it. Speaking of "Vietnamization", Walter Lippmann wrote, "The theory of the strategy is that a long occupation using some 200,000 support troops and the artillery and the Air Force, can be made acceptable to the American people. The official strategy is addressed not to negotiating with our

adversaries but to placating American opinion" (Newsweek, Dec. 1, 1969).

A programme of "accelerated pacification" was also launched, which now brushed aside demagogic measures to go straight to its goals: impounding of villages, creation of "white zones", dislocation of grass-root VC structures, all this by means of most brutal methods, which naturally led to such saturnalias of crime as in Ba Lang An, Kong H'Rinh, etc.

Nixon's new policy yielded, however, not very promising results. The defence belts considered by US leaders invulnerable could not protect enemy bases from South Vietnamese patriots' continued onslaughts. According to still incomplete statistics, the deadliest blows were dealt precisely at US armours; in the first nine months of 1969 alone, 7,450 tanks and armoured vehicles were destroyed (against 7,000 for the whole

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OUR CONSTITUTION IS 10 YEARS OLD

TEN years ago, on January 1, 1960, our people enthusiastically acclaimed the promulgation of the constitution of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. This constitution replaced the first one adopted by the first legislature of the National Assembly on Nov. 9, 1946. It was drafted by a Committee headed by our great leader, President Ho Chi Minh.

Showing due regard to the whole nation's revolutionary aspirations and interests, the new Constitution is a comprehensive program: it is the fundamental law of the State, and an efficient weapon in the hands of our people in the present stage of their revolution.

It makes it clear that "the territory of Viet Nam is a single, indivisible whole from North to South" and that "the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, established and consolidated as a result of the Vietnamese people's achievements in the glorious August Revolution and the heroic Resistance, is a people's democratic State. All the nationalities living on Vietnamese territory are equal in rights and in obligations. The State has the duty not only to maintain and strengthen solidarity between various nationalities, but also to help minority nationalities rapidly attain the general economic and cultural level. Our State is a people's democratic State based on the worker-peasant alliance, headed by the working class. All power in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam belongs to the people. The National Assembly, the People's Councils at all levels and the other organs of State put into practice democratic centralism."

The Constitution also underlines that "the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam belong to the people. They have the duty to defend the gains of the revolution, to safeguard the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of the Fatherland and to defend the freedom, happiness and peaceful labour of the people."

Concerning the building and development of our regime, the Constitution stipulates, "The Democratic Republic of Viet Nam is progressing step by step from people's democracy to socialism by developing and transforming the national economy along socialist lines, turning its backward economy into a socialist economy with a modern industry and agriculture, and advanced science and technology."

Ten years have elapsed since the coming into force of the Constitution and the Vietnamese Revolution has not deflected from the course charted therein. Following the line of the 2nd National Congress of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, our Party cadres and members and our whole people have achieved substantial results in all fields. Completing socialist transformation and pushing up the building of socialism, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam has been making steady progress.

The people's democratic State which assumes the historic task of proletarian dictatorship has enabled our citizens to enjoy his right as a collective master of the society and to give every day further proofs of his sense of responsibility as such.

The US imperialists waged, for four years running and with most diabolical methods, an atrocious war of destruction on the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, but far from harming the image of our regime, they only gave more lustre to its outstanding virtues in the eyes of the whole world. With the strength of its regime and the Party's sound policy, North Viet Nam has defeated all manoeuvres and destructive acts of the American aggressors and brilliantly fulfilled its obligations as the Great Rear-Base towards the Great Frontline, while continuing its steady march towards socialism.

Nhan Dan (The People)
Jan. 3, 1970

AT the 49th session of the Paris Conference, Ambassador Ha Van Lau, on behalf of the DRVN Government delegation, denounced the "negotiating from strength" policy advocated by the Nixon administration and its "Vietnamization of the war" strategy as attempts to achieve US aggressive goal, impose US neo-colonialism on South Viet Nam and perpetuate the division of Viet Nam.

To secure a "position of strength" in negotiations, the Ambassador said, the first thing Nixon did after entering the White House was to order the US

North Viet Nam, US aircraft have continued their reconnaissance flights and on many occasions bombarded Vinh Linh area and Quang Binh, Ha Tinh and Nghe An provinces and even attacked Thanh Hoa province on December 22.

It is precisely due to the US policy of "negotiating from strength," Mr. Ha Van Lau pointed out, that at the Paris Conference on Viet Nam, the US delegates showed neither goodwill nor seriousness, thus preventing the Conference from settling any question after nearly one year of work. He denounced the US for

49th Plenary Session of Paris Conference on

Viet Nam (Jan. 8, 1970)

Mr. HA VAN LAU:

"The Nixon Administration Is Persisting in Its Aggressive Scheme in Viet Nam"

military command in Saigon to exert "maximum military pressure", that is, to increase to the utmost the sweeps and air and artillery bombardments against the liberated areas of South Viet Nam. The number of the battalion-size or larger-scale sweeps under the Nixon administration has doubled that under the Johnson administration, the number of bombardments and toxic chemical sprayings has also increased considerably. In

clinging to its aggressive position, setting its face against all sensible, constructive, reasonable and logical proposals made by the DRVN Government Delegation and the RSVN PRG Delegation, repeating its absurd claim for "total troop withdrawal", asking for a price for the cessation of the US aggression, and obstinately maintaining in office the dictatorial, warlike and rotten Thieu-Ky-Khim administration in spite of the legitimate demand of the entire South Vietnamese people that this puppet administration be removed.

Since the Nixon administration has not reached its "negotiation from strength" objective, recently it has laid emphasis on the policy of "Vietnamization of the war" and regarded as secondary the search for a negotiated settlement of the Viet Nam problem. The DRVN envoy said the Nixon administration has practically downgraded the Conference so as to eventually thwart the search of a negotiated settlement of the war.

Dr. Arthur W. Galston, Professor of Biology at Yale University, outlined some of the harmful effects found to be caused by toxic chemicals used in South Viet Nam.

They included: — Mangrove bushes have been destroyed along streams where the Vietnamese people get much of their fish supply. It will take an estimated 25 years for these to grow again.

— Soil erosion takes place where plants have been destroyed.

— An "irreversible conversion to a bricklike mass" takes place on soils where

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Spring-Sown Rice: A New Element in North Viet Nam Food Crop Cultivation

Agronomist BUI HUY DAP
Director, Agronomic Institute

RICE cultivation in North Viet Nam has a long history: from time immemorial, our peasants have been in the habit of sowing autumn rice in the rainy summer, and summer rice in the dry winter. These crops are grown on arable land nearly all the year round, especially in the delta, and usually give low yields, particularly before the 1945 August Revolution (about 1.1—1.3 tons/hectare per crop, or 2.2—2.5 tons/hectare per year).

Intensive cultivation has been carried out since the war of resistance against the French colonialists, in the economic restoration and development after peace was re-established (1954), and especially in the recent past in a co-operativized countryside equipped with improved material and technical facilities. It is precisely in the resistance years against the US imperialists' war of destruction that it made

notable progress. Our peasants produced more than 5 tons of paddy per hectare on 160,000 hectares (1967), over 2,400 agricultural co-operatives reached this target in their fields, many of which hitting the 6 or 7-ton mark. It is in this intensive cultivation drive that spring-sown rice has appeared as a new element with unprecedented productivity. Many co-operatives have grown it on 40—50 per cent or over 70—80 per cent of the area usually under summer rice and achieved in the average 3—4 tons/hectare per crop (some of them having got even 4.5—6 tons). On the experimental intensive cultivation fields (one hectare upwards), spring-sown rice has given up to 7.8 or even 9 tons/hectare per crop. Thus to substitute spring-sown rice for low-yield summer rice constitutes a great success in our scientific research and our guided improvement of agricultural technique in

the recent years.

Over the past years, studies have been made on spring-sown rice, in various fields: plant physiology, tillage, plant diseases, agricultural botany, agricultural implements and machinery, agricultural economy... This exhaustive research along with cultivation on ever-larger areas has thrown light on the advantages of spring-sown rice, its capacities of higher productivity and the vista it will open as a main crop, as well as its prospective vigorous expansion in North Viet Nam's present agriculture. Spring-sown rice has accounted for very high yields—especially with the current "dwarf" variety—as compared with summer rice. With enough water, manure, a timely sowing and adequate farming techniques, we can easily obtain 4—5 tons/hectare per crop over a wide area. With intensified techniques of high farming, we shall be able

to nearly catch up with our Northern neighbours (Japan, North China...). Recently, in Nghe An, an experiment has been made to this effect and has chalked up more than 10 tons per hectare.

The introduction of spring-sown rice enables us to map out new directions for farming more promising than the old pattern: summer rice—autumn rice. If we replace the long-term summer rice crop by a shorter-term spring-sown rice crop, then before replanting spring rice we can raise a crop of green manure in the flooded fields (*azolla pinnata* in the delta and the midlands) or another kind in the dry fields in the mountains as food for the spring-sown rice. We can also grow such winter subsidiary crops as vegetables, potatoes, sweet potatoes before replanting spring-sown rice. Still we can plant a crop of *sesbania cannabica* by intertillage with a spring-sown rice crop to produce food for the autumn rice crop. By alternating *azolla pinnata* spring-sown rice + *sesbania cannabica* + autumn rice, we have obtained from 8 to 10 tons of paddy/hectare per year with a relatively low production cost and a fairly high labour productivity.

The rotation: winter subsidiary crops + spring-sown rice + *sesbania cannabica* + early autumn rice has been responsible for rather high output (5—6 tons of paddy/hectare per year) plus a sizeable amount of subsidiary crops, particularly with a crop of potatoes before spring-sown rice. One can also get a number of short-term industrial crops in rotation with spring-sown rice in the mountains as well as in the plains.

With the pattern thus set for spring-sown rice, with draught power and manpower more judiciously used, one can lighten the peasants' labour and achieve higher productivity than with former summer rice farming.

All these new possibilities point to the revolutionary advance represented by the introduction of spring-sown rice. This does not mean only a change of rice species or application of a few improved farming techniques, but a revolution in the production and working habits of the peasant masses.

Cultivation of spring-sown rice on ever larger areas in many localities has shown that it has contributed to higher production and bids fair to replace summer rice in North Viet Nam in most of the areas grown with winter-spring crop. Over the past years many co-operatives have put under spring-sown rice ever larger areas. This spring, many districts, many co-operatives have drawn up concrete plans to replant spring-sown rice on 80—100 per cent of the rice-growing areas of their co-operatives in the whole district. Thus the expansion rate and acreage of spring-sown rice has been clearly on the increase.

The introduction of spring-sown rice will make the 5 tons/hectare per year possible in wider areas. As a matter of fact, the co-operatives and districts which have reached this target year after year, have been growing spring-sown rice on a relatively extensive scale.

With the cultivation of spring-sown rice whose popularity is a certainty, a technical revolution in rice growing begins in North Viet Nam, which will vigorously develop with the ceaseless strengthening of the material and technical basis in the course of socialist industrialization. A new stage of expansion will be ushered in for our rice cultivation.



Preparations for Winter 1969-Spring 1970 cultivations at Tan Dinh cooperative (Thach Ha district, Ha Tinh province).

US PUPPET CRIMES

A MARTYR VILLAGE SOUTH OF DMZ

ON May 18, 1967 a big sweep was mounted against Trung Hai commune, by 15 enemy battalions to turn it into a no man's land. Thousands of dwellings were set afire, a great number of domestic animals killed, and hundreds of hectares of cropland devastated by toxic chemicals. The inhabitants were ordered off to a concentration camp. As they stubbornly resisted, they were subjected to heavy bombardments. Since early October 1967, shells of various calibres have been indiscriminately fired on the village on a round-the-clock basis, destroying everything: houses, fields and roads. Aircraft of various types harassed them with explosive and time-bombs. Sometimes a target was hit many times in one

day until it was erased from the map.

In 1968, 1,160 tons of bombs were released on the village in 66 B52 sorties, 1,300 bombs were dumped on it in 80 co-ordinates-reading bombings and over 2,000 bombs in 75 dive-bombing raids by other aircraft. More odious still, US planes dropped about one hundred time-bombs along the Ben Hai river and other communication lines to hamper the movement of the population and upset their daily activities.

In the first half of 1966, according to still incomplete figures, over 10,000 bombs of various sizes were poured on the village, razing everything and causing 245 casualties among the inhabitants.

US CHEMICAL WARFARE IN SOUTH VIET NAM

(As seen by American scientists)

IN a symposium on chemical and biological warfare held by the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boston, many American scientists came out strongly against the US administration's using toxic chemicals in South Viet Nam causing heavy losses to the local population, AP reported.

Dr. Matthew Meselson, Professor of Biology at Harvard University, said at a news conference that chemicals used by the US in South Viet Nam had had "unprecedented application", that enough chemicals "to cover 7,000 square miles (11,263 square kilometres) have been spread" there.

Dr. Arthur W. Galston, Professor of Biology at Yale University, outlined some of the harmful effects found to be caused by toxic chemicals used in South Viet Nam.

They included: — Mangrove bushes have been destroyed along streams where the Vietnamese people get much of their fish supply. It will take an estimated 25 years for these to grow again.

— Soil erosion takes place where plants have been destroyed.

— An "irreversible conversion to a bricklike mass" takes place on soils where

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year of 1968), and 6,000 aircraft, mostly choppers, were downed against 6,000 for the whole year of 1968). As for the total of US casualties, *USIS* on Sept. 26, 1969 quoted the *Journal of US Armed Forces* as recognizing that it had increased by 30 percent in the first 6 months under Nixon as compared with the last 6 months under Johnson. The reduction of US losses to a level "acceptable" to the average American, a major objective of the new President, did not come to pass and this explained in part the new waves of anti-war protests in the United States in the last months of 1969.

What of the programme of replacement of US troops by puppet troops? It turned out a pipe dream in its process of realization. Though profusely equipped with up-to-date weapons, the puppet army could only make a poor show. Its losses were the heaviest right in the experimentation zone of

come to a conclusion regardless of what happens at the negotiating table. It will come to a conclusion as a result of the plan that we have instituted on which we are embarked for replacing American troops with Vietnamese troops" (Nov. 21, 1969 press conference).

As early as January 1969, when Kissinger published in *Foreign Affairs* his article on "Viet Nam negotiations", the public was informed of the lack of enthusiasm with which the new US administration was coming to the quadripartite Conference in Paris. Nixon's adviser suggested instead two parallel negotiations: one between Hanoi and Washington on military problems (so as to put across the absurd contention of an "invasion of South Viet Nam by the new US administration") and the other between Saigon and the NFL (so as to legalize the Saigon puppet administration). This US thesis of a two-track negotiation was put forth at the Paris Conference in March and April 1969.

Meanwhile, the Nixon administra-

withdrawal" of the bulk of American and "other non-South Vietnamese" troops within 12 months, following which American troops would move into designated base areas to wait for the complete withdrawal of "other non-South Vietnamese troops".

As public pressure was continually mounting in the United States for a rapid return of the American Expeditionary Corps, Nixon made on June 8, 1969 a new move by announcing a cullback of 45,000 GIs. Two other announcements of troop reduction took place in the following months. Observers immediately remarked that with these withdrawals by dribbles at the tempo of 10,000 per month, American troops would still have to stay in Viet Nam for many years to come, if really Nixon wanted to bring them all home. But that was not the US president's intention, as in his Nov. 3, 1969 speech, he reasserted his firm resolve to continue the war through "Vietnamization", that is

one mission, that of keeping South Viet Nam as a new-type colony and military base of the United States and of perpetuating the partition of Viet Nam.

This is especially true with the Thieu-Ky-Khiem military junta which Nixon's representatives in Paris present as the "legal and constitutional government" of South Viet Nam. In his book *A New Foreign Policy for the US*, Hans J. Morganthau had this to say about the present ruling clique in Saigon: "A government so precariously and in all likelihood temporarily placed as that of South Viet Nam can have only two main incentives: to ensure the survival of its members and to draw as much material gain as possible from an advantageous situation which is not likely to last."

To such a "government", Nixon wanted to entrust the organizing of general elections which are to enable the South Vietnamese people to decide freely their own future. As a matter of fact, he completely approved of the 6 points announced by Nguyen Van Thieu on July 11, 1969, which moreover stated that the NFL was allowed to take part in the elections if it agreed to "renounce the use of force", that is to lay down its weapons. Mention should also be made that, according to Nixon's 8-point programme, general elections would be held in the period following the withdrawal of the greater part of American troops, which means under the continued occupation of South Viet Nam by some 200,000 GIs.

Such was the Nixonian way of allowing the South Vietnamese to exercise their right to self-determination. It seemed safe enough for the neo-colonialists, and for the US President, to undertake that he was prepared to accept any regime resulting from South Viet Nam elections.

..

WITH his prolonged refusal to nominate a successor to Cabot Lodge at the head of the American Delegation to Saigon, Nixon no longer anxious to conceal his indifference to the Paris Conference. Evidently, he feels very little interest in a negotiated settlement of the Viet Nam problem. This has been made clear by himself.

Does Nixon want a settlement by force of arms? Does he believe sincerely that the return to a new kind of "special war" improved by the addition of the atom bomb and weaponry given to the puppet army and a large contingent of US support troops would bring his neo-colonialist venture to a happy ending?

The US President should not forget that South Vietnamese patriots had defeated the puppet army in 1960-1965, then held at bay a half-million-strong American Expeditionary Corps armed to the teeth in the years 1968-1969. It is crystal clear that the association of a demoralized puppet army and a badly mauled American Expeditionary Corps will not result in a victory for the rulers in Washington.

"The resistance war against US aggression may drag on. Our patriots may have to face new sacrifices and sacrifices stage. Whatever may happen, we must keep firm our resolve to fight the US aggressors till total victory. The ultimate victory which Ho Chi Minh will be fulfilled by a whole nation who already hold in their hands the key to final victory."

Thieu-Ky Dictatorial Regime Revealed by American Study Team

(Concluded)

TORTURE

A disturbing aspect of the prison situation in Viet Nam is physical abuse of prisoners... Frequently, the interrogation center at the National Police Headquarters in Saigon was mentioned as a scene of torture. However, many informants said that the types and extent of torture administered in some of the detention centers in the provinces were far worse than in the National Police interrogation center in Saigon. Although Team members were allowed to visit the National Police Headquarters in Saigon, it was an arranged visit.

Team members saw the interrogation room but no prisoners were being questioned. The Team's evidence for the torture described came from interviews with ex-prisoners testifying to what they had endured and seen, together with the statements of doctors and others who had treated the victims.

All prisoners are oppressed by conditions of overcrowding. Sometimes, however, many prisoners are stuffed into small cells which do not allow for lying down or sometimes, even for sitting, and this, when it is steaming hot, when there is excrement accumulation, and when the prisoners are seldom released for exercise, is torture indeed.

Beating is the most common form of abuse... This is done with wooden sticks and clubs. ("metal" was mentioned by one observer). The blows are applied to the back and to the bony parts of the legs and the hands, and, in particularly painful form, to the elevated soles of the feet when the body is in a prone position. Beating of the genitals also occurs. A number of commentators also described the immersion of prisoners into tanks of water which are then beaten with a stick once the prisoners are submerged. This is particularly intense and the resultant injuries are internal.

Another type of water torture in which a soaked cloth is placed over the nose and mouth of a prisoner tied back-down to a bench is said to be very common. The cloth is removed at the last moment before the victim chokes to death, and then is re-applied. In a related form, the victim is pumped into the nose.

The most common procedure is said to be the elevation of the victim on a rope

to such that the arrested was crossed to his back. One witness described a "bicycle torture" used in this center. For about a week, the prisoner is forced to maintain a squat position with an iron bar locking his wrists to his ankles. "Afterward he cannot walk or even straighten up", it was said.

An intellectual who was arrested in 1969 and spent the first six months of his two and one-half year term in an interrogation center described what he called the "typical case" of a woman law student in the nearby cell. Throughout this year, she was tortured mostly by beating. When she was finally called before a tribunal to hear the charges, she had to be carried by two fellow prisoners...

The same informant said, as a number of others did, that sexual torture was common. Frequently coke and beer bottles were prodded into the vagina. Also, there were a number of accounts of electric wires applied to the genitals of males and females, as well as to other sensitive parts of the body. Another informant told of the torture by electricity of an eight-year old girl for the purpose of finding her father.

"She said her father was dead, and they just kept torturing her. They tortured her mother too." This was said to have occurred in the National Police Interrogation Center (Saigon) during 1968. Several ex-prisoners testified that it is not unusual to torture family members, including children, before the eyes of the prisoners.

A respected physician told Team members that recently police brought a dead girl from an interrogation center to a city hospital and asked the Doctor there to certify to death from natural causes. On examination of the cadaver, the Doctor found signs of beating and sexual violation. He refused to so certify. Pressure was brought on the head of the hospital to issue the certificate. Such incidents are not unusual...

In fact, procedural protections are essentially non-existent at the arrest and interrogation stage. Arrests are made by a wide variety of local and national officials — by district police, special security forces, military forces and intelligence units — each exercising a relatively unfettered discretion. The arrest may

occur for no other reason than that the arrested was found near the scene of a guerrilla raid. Unless the arrested person is of exceptional importance, he will usually be detained by the arresting unit or by the district or security police in the district or province.

Such detention for interrogation frequently continues for many months and it is at this stage that the bestial brutality the Team encountered occurs...

Not only is the arrested denied a right to counsel at this stage, he is frequently denied all contact with outsiders, including members of his family. Often families are not notified of the arrest, and they may go for days or months in ignorance of the fact that their loved-one has disappeared...

The Study Team has reached the conclusion that the Thieu-Ky government has, through the extensive and increasing use of the extra-constitutional Military Field Courts, imprisoned thousands of persons without the most fundamental elements of a fair hearing and, in a shocking number of instances, without even the minimum imprisonment of persons of the charges against them...

The Independent Study Team on Religious and Political Freedom in Viet Nam has completed its study here and is preparing a detailed report. The Team met with South Vietnamese (puppets) and United States officials, various Buddhist and Roman Catholic leaders, representatives of their principal sects, members of the National Assembly, Attorneys and other specialists in jurisprudence as well as numerous private individuals, including some prisoners.

The Team inspected prisons in Saigon, Thu Duc and Con Son. Our final report will be related to the following firm impressions. Religious and political suppression is widespread. Speaking for peace or in any other way opposing the Government easily brings the charge of Communist sympathies and subsequent arrest. Long detention without trial is frequently the result.

The number of political prisoners continues to increase.

There must be no illusion that the climate of political and religious suppression is compatible with either a representative or stable government.

"As soon as the Saigon polyclinic has advertised that anyone who 'donates' blood receives 10,000 piastres, a brand-new 500-piastre note, every day from 40 to 50 people crowded into the place. What a pitiful sight, those shabby men and women queuing up for their turn! I also met many soldiers of all branches and services of the armed forces. They all looked weary, haggard, their weather-beaten faces the same colour as dirt. They sat there looking against the wall waiting for their turn, too. Here are some fragments of conversation I gleaned."

"My kid has been sick for the past couple of days. Without those 500 piastres, he would have to go without medication."

"Merciful Buddha in the heavens, help me sell my blood today. There's not a grain of rice left at home!"

"Good fellow-men, will you be kind enough to let me go in first? My wife had a difficult delivery. I fear she won't pull through without these 500 piastres. Please, let me go in first!"

Probably few know that this is a routine occurrence at the Saigon hospital near the Ben Thanh market."

The above excerpt comes from a short reportage appearing in the Saigon paper Tin Son (Morning News) on December 1969. And here is another story carried by the daily Chinh Luan (Righteous Opinion) on November 5, 1969:

"At 10.30 yesterday (Nov. 4) a very elegant gala took place at Maxims' Tu Do Street, Saigon. Aside from flawless variety shows, guests were also treated to European delicacies with first-quality Whisky and champagne. The place was packed. Madame Nguyen Van Thieu, First Lady of the Republic of Viet Nam."

Review of Saigon Press

About the Saigon Junta's "Austerity Programme"

Also present were the Prime Minister and Madame Tran Thieu Khiem, the Honourable Speakers of the Senate and the Lower House, a large number of ministers, senators and representatives. The press was also invited, at the uniform price of 2,500 piastres a plate. However, there was an unmistakable sense of hierarchy in the placement of the guests: there were the first and second class, and the guests were seated in the order of the Vietnamese communal life; then there were the press tables near the entrance. According to the indications on the invitation card, President Nguyen Van Thieu was scheduled to come and preside over the gala, but at the last moment only Mme Thieu turned up.

It should be noted that Maxims' is one of the plushiest and cosiest restaurants in Saigon at present. Except for the European dishes, the Whisky and Martell and the songs and dances, nothing particular happened at the gala."

Along with reports on these two diametrically opposite happenings, the Saigon papers, intentionally or not, have been vying with one another in bringing to light the shady money deals of the big wigs in the city. According to the press, in a crack-down on contraband gold, a representative was unfortunate enough to be found in possession of 250 taels of "illegal" gold.

"Each tael of gold at the present rate fetching at least 14,000 piastres, how much will 250 taels make?" (Long Luan queried on December 6, 1969). The paper added: "We ask our readers to make this multiplication because it is rumoured that a big shot has baited the offender." The same paper on December 9 made known that thanks to the austerity drive (levied on luxury goods - Ed.) a senator "one day woke up to find himself richer by sixty or seventy million piastres with the sale of iron of every kind."

The press has also disclosed that 150 men of importance had evaded income taxes on nearly 200 billion piastres. And high on the list of the tax-evaders was the Minister of State Vu Quyet Thuc of the executive, and Senator Tran Trung Dung of the legislative (Tin Son, December 2, 1969). The daily Quyet Tien wrote on December 3: "Remarkably enough, all those big shots have evaded taxes not out of money pressure. Take the case of Senator D. He owns a building in the Tu Do Street which he is renting to foreigners for millions of piastres a month. Or the Minister of State. He cannot possibly run short of money since he has always been a big mandarin from one government to the next."

Expenses of the "Representatives" in the discharge of their official functions were also passionately discussed. The paper Xay Dung (Constructive Ideas) reported on December 10: "The car repairs of a certain Representative ran to 100,280 piastres in the first half of 1969 and 103,098 piastres in the latter half, which total 203,378 piastres. Another Representative, chairman of the Budget Committee, received 51,301 piastres in 1968 and 54,265 piastres in 1969 for car repairs alone." Another Representative squandered 17,935 piastres of the public fund on phone calls. The paper Tin Tuyen (Frontline) wrote on Dec. 10, 1969: "A Representative who took a public car to the airport to go to Bac Lieu accidentally damaged it. The reconditioning cost 94,411 piastres in 1968 and 35,314 piastres in 1969. Most recently, the car was again put back in order for 90,000 piastres." Another

(Continued page 7)

NIXON'S FIRST YEAR IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND VIET NAM

the "Vietnamization" programme, especially in the High Plateaux and the Mekong Delta and deserters rate among them rose to the startling figure of 10,000 per month, according to US official source

As far as "accelerated pacification" is concerned, it proved to be a completely futile effort. 1969 supplied a confirmation of this prediction of presidential adviser Henry Kissinger: "The consolidation of (South Viet Nam puppet-Id) governmental authority was delayed — perhaps indefinitely — by the Tet offensive." And *US News and World Report*, admitted in its Oct. 27, 1969 issue that basic organizations of the "Viet Cong" were more powerful than ever in 1969.

LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR FOUR-SIDED NEGOTIATIONS

AS "Vietnamization" had not yet exposed all its fundamental weaknesses, the Nixon administration could still indulge in boastful statements on its merits. However, the American public has seen too many optimistic declarations from official quarters preceding critical situations (for instance Westmoreland's November 1967 and Johnson's January 1968 declarations not long before the Tet offensive).

On the other hand, still nurturing illusions on the capabilities of its new policy, the White House has been working with a total victory in prospect, although by less spectacular methods. (*The Observer*, Nov. 9, quoted by Philippe Devillers in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 1969 issue). That is what one can read into the following words of President Nixon: "The Viet Nam war will

tion left no stone unturned to block the progress of the Paris talks and to play down its importance.

To any sensible observers it is clear that to settle the Viet Nam issue, the first step is to withdraw US troops of aggression from South Viet Nam to provide facilities for the South Vietnamese people to exercise their right to self-determination through free and democratic general elections. Nixon's representatives in Paris have been systematically refusing to discuss such a withdrawal.

ALL MEANS ARE FAIR TO AVOID A COMPLETE OF WITHDRAWAL AGGRESSIVE TROOPS

AT the Paris negotiations, they began by raising a series of "unrealistic" questions such as withdrawal from South Viet Nam of "non-South Vietnamese troops", restoration of the DMZ, the problem of POWs, that of Laos and that of Cambodia, etc. All these were manoeuvres to distract public opinion from the central issue: withdrawal of US aggressor troops.

Then, seeing that he could not dodge it indefinitely, Nixon laid down on March 14, 1969 three conditions for an American troop pull-out: the progress of the puppet army, that of the Paris Conference and the decrease of PLAF activities in South Viet Nam. All this was tantamount to postponing sine die the repatriation of American troops.

On May 14, 1969, driven to the wall by the to-point proposal of the NFL, Nixon delivered a speech in which he put forth his own 8-point programme stipulating a "mutual

by using American troops as support for a puppet army beefed up, trained and equipped by the Pentagon.

The above successive stands taken by Nixon on US troop withdrawal show why after a year of negotiations the Paris Conference did not make a single step forward. Walter Lippmann, in the already quoted article, wrote that "the Paris" negotiations have not even begun because the American rulers "have not in fact taken the crucial decision about ending the war", i.e. the decision relating to the total withdrawal of American troops.

NIXON'S CONCEPTION OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

IN such conditions, how could the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination be ensured? Nixon likes to repeat that "what the United States wants for South Viet Nam is not the important thing, what North Viet Nam wants for South Viet Nam is not the important thing, what is important is what the people of South Viet Nam want for themselves" (May 19, 1969 speech). Or Sept. 26, 1969, he reasserted that there could be no negotiation about the right of South Vietnamese people to freely choose their own leaders, without external pressure, American or other. However, all "governments" in South Viet Nam since 1954 have been but creations of US intervention and aggression and have been able to survive only thanks to US dollars and weapons. These "governments" have only

5th Founding Anniversary of Thailand Patriotic Front

NEW SUCCESS OF THAILAND'S PATRIOTIC ANTI-US MOVEMENT

FIVE years ago, on Jan. 1, 1965, the Thailand Patriotic Front was set up, marking an important advance in the Thai people's movement against US imperialism and its lackeys. Since then, from the cities to the rural areas, from the mountains to the deltas, the Front has been going on without interruption and in different forms. Tens of thousands of workers have taken part in hundreds of strikes for better living conditions. Many walk-outs have erupted right at US military bases. Hundreds of thousands of peasants have come out against exploitation and against evictions by the US imperialists and their lackeys for enlargement of military bases. National democratic feeling has become more articulate among university and college students and progressive intellectuals.

The patriotic gunfire, first heard in August 1965 in the north-eastern uplands, has spread to many parts of the country. According to the *Voice of the People of Thailand* Radio, in four years ending in Aug. 1969, the Thai patriotic armed forces fought more than 2,000 battles, killing or wounding 4,300 silver troops, including a number of US aggressors, shooting down or destroying 13 aircraft of different types and wrecking dozens of military vehicles. In addition, they duly punished 300 reactionaries who owed blood debts to the people.

In January 1966, the Command of the Thailand People's Liberation Army was set up, spelling out the growth of the patriotic armed forces. At present the people's armed struggle is involving 130 districts of 33 provinces. In 1969, in southern Thailand alone, it extended to more than 10 districts of 8 provinces, striking alarm into

the hearts of reactionary rulers. In December 1969, the latter had to proclaim martial law in those 8 provinces and muster thousands of troops, including marines supported by aircraft and artillery against the guerrillas. In the north-eastern region, the Liberation Army has been very active. It has fought hundreds of engagements, beating off many enemy raids and wiping out a large amount of enemy man-power. On July 28, 1969, a few hours before Nixon arrived in Bangkok, the patriotic armed forces in the north-eastern area attacked Ubon air base, one of the 6 biggest US air bases in Thailand, blasting down 2 radar stations. In the North, the Liberation Army has also stepped up its activities.

In 1969, alongside the actions of patriotic fighters, political and economic drives against the US imperialists, among workers, peasants and other strata of the people. In the first half of 1969, more than 13,500 workers staged 42 strikes and other actions against oppression and exploitation by the US imperialists and the Thonam clique. In the same period, more than 6,000 university and college students 7 times held school strikes or demonstrations in protest against the depraved education system imposed by the US imperialists and their lackeys. In the first 9 months of 1969, nearly 300,000 peasants took part in over 100 demonstrations against land usurpation by the US for the building of military bases, against exploitation and oppression and for reduction of land rent and land interests. The Thai people have also been militating for the ruling clique's immediate withdrawal of mercenary troops from South Viet Nam.

IN THE UNITED STATES

LAWYERS DEMAND COMPLETE US TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM VIET NAM

The New York Times on December 21, 1969 published the following appeal bearing the signatures of two hundred of the "Lawyers Against the War" in New York urging the Nixon administration to bring home all US troops from South Viet Nam:

"We are New York City lawyers who urge that US troops be immediately and completely withdrawn from all combat activities in Viet Nam and that immediate and complete withdrawal of all such forces from

Viet Nam. We take this position because:

1. The struggle taking place in Viet Nam poses no threat to our national security. Our activities there have, if anything, seriously undermined our efforts to achieve a world tolerant of diverse ideologies and political systems.

2. We have put ourselves in the indefensible position of supporting a war and a corrupt government, which lacks both the desire and capacity to bring about a viable, just Vietnamese society and exists only through censorship,

oppression and US support.

3. The war has seriously aggravated problems at home, and threatens to scar the quality of American life and to divide the American people against their own citizens, prisoners of war and alienating an entire generation.

In sum, the senseless slaughter and waste of national resources daily occurring in Viet Nam cannot be justified. The US must candidly face this fact. We urge that the US immediately discontinue its military and economic aid to the Vietnamese society and exist only through censorship,

207 US AIRCRAFT DOWNED IN 1969

1969 saw an unprecedented stepping up of US air raids on the free areas of Laos but also the heaviest losses in US aircraft since the beginning of US bombings in May 1964. KPL Agency reported.

The agency said that in 1969, the Laotian patriotic forces had downed 207 US aircraft (128 in the first 6 months). The daily record ran to 7 planes on Jan. 7.

The US imperialists lost

82 planes in Xieng Khuaung province where from 30 to 200 air sorties were flown daily and 45 in Savannakhet province. APL Agency added.

With small arms, the patriots downed from January to November 1969 110 US planes, representing 53 per cent of the total of US planes lost in the same period.

KPL Agency recalled that since May 17, 1964 the US imperialists had lost 1,195 aircraft in Laos.

ASIAN-AFRICAN-LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY MEETING

ON the evening of Jan. 7, the Viet Nam Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity held a meeting in Hanoi in observance of the Week of Solidarity with the Struggle for National Liberation of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America (Jan. 3-10, 1970).

It was attended by Mme Nguyen Thi Luu, Vice Chairman of the Committee; Phan Lac Tuyen, member of the Special Representation of the RSVN in the DRVN; and representatives of various public services and mass organisations of the capital.

After the opening speech by Mme Nguyen Thi Luu, Hoang Bac, Assistant Secretary-General of the Committee, took the floor. He praised the great successes of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America in their fight against US-led imperialism and colonialism. He pointed to the revolutionary tide now surging in the 3 continents in multiple and varied forms.

He strongly condemned the US imperialists and their lackeys' pernicious, perfidious and vicious attempts to stamp out the popular revolutionary movement in many countries. He stressed that the imperialists and colonialists would never succeed in turning back the wheel of history and in erasing bitter failure, however obstinate and wicked they might be. The Vietnamese people, Hoang Bac continued, warmly thank the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America and ac-

claim their inestimable support as a strong stimulus for the Vietnamese resistance against US aggression and a fine token of international solidarity among peoples in arms standing in the same combat trench against US-led imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. On the occasion of the Week of Solidarity with the Asian, African and Latin American Peoples, the Vietnamese people express once again their militant solidarity and their full support for the effort of the tri-continental peoples. Always standing by their side, the Vietnamese people are firmly convinced that the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, closely united in their tenacious and persistent struggle, will infallibly win final victory. With President Ho Chi Minh's last directions, the Vietnamese people will never waver in their resolve to completely defeat the US aggressors, to defend the North, liberate the South and eventually achieve the peaceful unification of the country, thereby making a worthy contribution to the revolution in the three continents and the rest of the world.

The audience unanimously passed a resolution calling for unqualified support for the movement of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America against US imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, for national independence, social progress and world peace.

A Liberation Army Heroine

WHEN the enemy stepped up his concentration program in Quang Tri province in 1969, Nguyen Thi Lai, who was 18, joined the ranks of the Revolution: she was assigned the task of seeing to the security of militants in her village until its liberation.

She was charged with the forming of a shock unit to carry out political action. Together with twelve other young girls, she took to target practice and even succeeded in making weapons out of dud bombs and shells, with which she blew up a Jeep: of the three passengers on board, two GIs were killed and the driver, a puppet soldier, had a leg broken. After the explosion, she came to the scene and, while tending the wounded, she said: "You see how risky for you to serve the Yankees? What will your wife and children think of you if you got killed?"

Moved, the puppet soldier thanked her profusely. However, hearing the blast, the enemy had the village bombarded and puppet troops rushed in. Lai told them: "You got licked by the VC and you are retreating on the inhabitants. Pay damages for the burnt huts."

The puppet soldiers went away, hanging their heads. In September 1967, she joined the Saigon presidential elections in her village by having hand-grenades smuggled by unsuspected women into the polling booth. The explosions killed two Saigon officials while outside our men set fire to two motor-cars. The voting was cancelled.

Lai and several of her mates were arrested in an engagement. Put to the rack and exposed to the sun with their arms and legs tied, they obstinately refused to supply any information likely to harm our people. Going on strike, Lai saw three men penned up in a

WC. This rent her heart. She swore to avenge the co-villagers and herself for the ill-treatment received. After twenty days of detention, the enemy set her and her mates free.

She once saved a militant who was within a hair-breadth of being arrested by taking him to safety in her craft. She was then again apprehended.

"Where have you hidden that Viet Cong?", barked the myrmidon who questioned her.

"You're mistaken," she said. "I was fetching fodder for my cattle alone on my craft."

"Why was your craft blood-stained?"

"I was bitten by a leech!" She withstood the torture and was finally released. She then worked underground and took command of the village guerrilla unit.

Early in 1968, panicked by the general attacks and uprisings, the enemy chose to dig in in some key areas. Lai's village was then under the control of thousands of Yan-

kees and puppet troops. Dwellings were levelled to make room for barracks; the inhabitants were impounded, and the village, isolated, looked like an islet in the sea.

Lai persisted in the assignment to re-establish contacts with the people. She had to spend many days under water to avoid being spotted by enemy planes and patrols before entering the village at nightfall. Enlightened, the inhabitants fought successfully for the freedom to go and work in the field.

But her father who had not seen her, scoured the waterlogged ricefields to look for her. Only on the fifth day did she turn up, thinking it would be wiser for her to keep her route dark. The revolutionary work resumed with renewed ardour, and soon the enemy suffered appreciable losses.

Nguyen Thi Lai was awarded a Military Order first class, two Military Medals second class and two others third class. The PRG of the RSVN just cited her as a "Heroine of the PLAF" when she was 24.

US-PUPPET CRIMES

(Continued from page 2)

some of the chemicals are used.

The beneficial algae of streams and paddies are destroyed.

Dr. Galaton pointed out that in animal experiments "birth defects are caused in some of the animals; among these defects are cleft palate, blindness, absence of a brain and abnormal liver."

The French newspaper *Le Monde* published in its Jan. 2, 1970 issue a chart which gave an idea to what extent "defoliating" products have been used in South Viet Nam by the Americans (figures from official estimates):

In 1962: 17,836 acres of crops and other cultures were ruined.
In 1963: 34,814 acres
In 1964: 64,009 acres
In 1965: 144,363 acres
In 1966: 888,274 acres
In 1967: 1,707,758 acres
In 1968: 1,348,308 acres
In the first 3 months of 1969: 356,818 acres.

The paper said that two American zoologists conducted in South Viet Nam a two-year investigation in 1968 then published in *Scientific Research* (June 9 and 23 1969 issues) some data on defoliating products which had been used. They were

unable to travel into defoliated forests and the mountains. However, their trips to some areas North of Saigon (South and West of Saigon) showed that places sprayed years ago with toxic chemicals were still without a single tree. In areas traditionally covered with mangroves, animal life has been seriously harmed, only fish-eating birds could survive, and in restricted numbers at that. The direct effect of chemical products on animals has not been proved, but it was evident that the dramatic change in their living conditions has upset their normal life and can even result in their disappearance.

As toxic chemicals were primarily used against NFL-controlled areas, the puppet went on to say, their effects on soils could not be thoroughly studied. However, it is already possible to raise some questions concerning the aftermaths on agricultural production of air raids, especially B-52 raids. These super-torres dug some 1,000,000 craters in 1968 only. Some districts were so devastated that no crop could be grown. The craters turned into ponds were rife with mosquitoes, which only

lecturers into the puppet army. The students' delegates of this faculty also opposed the bill forcing students into two-year compulsory service before resuming their training. This action was also spearheaded against Nixon's

plan of "Vietnamization" of the war. Many South Vietnamese youths studying abroad also joined in this campaign, and some of them had been tried in absentia by the Saigon tribunal.

US ARMED FORCES BROADCASTING SYSTEM HUSHES UP THE TRUTH

In a broadcast on the night of Jan. 3, 1970, Robert Lawrence, 27, an announcer of the broadcasting system of the US armed forces in South Viet Nam (AFVN), denounced that the announcers were not allowed to tell the truth. He said that the most zealous of his colleagues

had been transferred, three of them were dismissed or shifted to other jobs for protesting the censorship imposed by the US Command. Though aware that he would get in trouble, he made up his mind to reveal that the US Command had hushed up the truth about the Viet Nam war.

ABOUT THE SAIGON JUNTA'S "AUSTERITY PROGRAMME"

(Continued from page 5)

Representative used two telephones, one at his office, the other at his residence, to direct the charges in Saigon. He owned in Qui Nhon at night. The bill amounted to 44,078 piastres in six months.

The secretary of the Speaker of the Lower House got 13,235 piastres for his private phone calls. According to Cong Luong on December 10, 1969, Speaker of the House, Nguyen Ba Luong bought an air conditioner for his government-owned car, for 200,000 piastres.

So, compared with such extravagant expenses, the 2,500-piastre-a-plate dinner is a miserably small sum. As an "austerity" on the part of the man-in-the-street, how "happy" he is to be allowed to queue up and sell his blood for "charity" purposes and be exempted from the military service. There may be more vivid illustrations for President Thieu's derangement that "the present life of the population of the Republic of Viet Nam can be rated as a comfortable one."

increased the risk of epidemics.

Several other questions can be mooted, for instance concerning gases: in highly concentrated doses they can endanger human life. Attention must be paid to the effects of a product called "orange" (which constitutes roughly 90 per cent of doses of defoliating products dropped from aircraft) on men, as well as on trees, rice plants and animals. The problem is all the more serious as it concerns not only the present but also the future of the Vietnamese people.

The paper stressed that the US administration had just prohibited the use, in the United States but not in Viet Nam, of 2, 4, 5-T as defoliating products, as from January 1970. Viet "orange" is composed by half with these products... Fears have been strong enough to lead to the prohibition in the United States. What is bad for American children, the paper said, is evidently bad for South Vietnamese children too.

Representative Richard McCarthy (Democrat, New York) in a text made public in November, requested that "potentially dangerous"

defoliating products be also totally forbidden in Viet Nam. He put the question why Dr. Dubridge, scientific adviser to President Nixon, forbade in the United States a product still allowed to be used in South Viet Nam. He also asked why after (puppet) President Thieu had closed down the Saigon paper *Tie Song* (which had written that the Saigon administration wanted to conceal to public the use of defoliating agents) the opinion the increase of ill-formed babies the US Embassy in Saigon had done nothing to verify such information.

In waiting for the result of eventual investigations, *Le Monde* concluded, it seems that the White House has taken the risk, with its scientific dossier in hand, of seeing a growing number of ill-formed Vietnamese babies as a result of the use of defoliating products. It should also be added that the war could be "Vietnamized" without scaling down at all the use of defoliating products. This example alone mentions can also be made of the action of US airplanes and artillery — proves that Washington's "new policy" will eventually produce catastrophic effects on Vietnamese lives



A PLAF unit on the march

PLAF TO OBSERVE 4-DAY TET TRUCE

Giai Phong Press Agency made public on Jan. 5, 1970 a statement of the PRG and an order of the PLAF Command on the suspension of attacks for 4 days during the Tet festival. This decision has been prompted as usual, say the said documents, by the humanitarian policy of the PRG, to allow the people, the members of the puppet administration and army as well as US servicemen and US satellite troops, to enjoy the Lunar new year.

The truce will come into effect from 7 hour February 5 to 7 hours February 9, 1970, local time.

On this occasion, the PRG reaffirms its resolve to continue the present resistance to a finish and calls on the PLAF men to be ready to punish all enemy violations of the truce and provocation.

Military Operations

- ⊙ IN ONE NIGHT (Jan. 3) 6 SUB-SECTOR CPs AND 70 MILITARY POSTS IN MY THO PROVINCE STORMED.
- ⊙ IN BREACHES OF THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE, 4 PUPPET COMPANIES WIPED OUT OR DECIMATED IN TAY NINH AND TRA VINH PROVINCES.
- ⊙ MORE THAN 160 ENEMY TROOPS KNOCKED OUT IN SAIGON AND PERIPHERY.
- ⊙ PLAF ATTACKS STEPPED UP IN DA NANG REGION SINCE JANUARY 5.

ON Jan. 3, PLAF men attacked again My Tho province, about 40 km southwest of Saigon, on the Mekong left bank, Gaii Phong Press Agency reported. More than 80 military targets and 6 sub-sector CPs were hit, with the losses suffered on the night of Dec. 27, the total enemy toll ran to over 600 casualties and 17 military vehicles and 4 cannons destroyed.

The same source reported that on Dec. 24 and 25, the enemy had launched two sweeps in Tra Vinh province (120 km south-southwest of Saigon) and Tay Ninh province (about 100 km northwest of Saigon). In their violations of the Christmas truce initiated by the PRG, they were duly punished, having 2 puppet companies wiped out with all their weapons and equipment seized near Tien Can, Tra Vinh province, and a company written off and

another one decimated in Tay Ninh province.

In Saigon, on Jan. 2, the patriotic forces put out of commission two US military vehicles in the street and killed the soldiers on board. The guerrillas were also very active in the suburbs of the city, knocking out of action 160 adverse troops between Dec. 5 and 21, 1969.

Western agencies reported that new PLAF assaults had been made on Jan. 5 and 6 south of Da Nang, chiefly near Que Son where a battalion of Regiment 7, US Marine Division 1, sustained "the heaviest losses in one battle since November last." These sources listed 70 GI casualties in this daring coup de main of the PLAF who had slipped at night into the barracks, taking the Yankees completely unawares. On the same night, they added, PLAF runners pounded at least 37 targets including Da Nang

base, the signal centres at Ban Me Thuot and Pleiku (Western High Plateaux).

To give an idea of the patriots' activities in December, Gaii Phong Press Agency said that in Binh Chanh and Duc Hoa districts, about 20 km west and southwest of Saigon, 550 enemy troops were disabled, 20 choppers downed, 2 vehicles, 7 cannons and an ammunition depot destroyed in that month. In the same month, in Ben Tre, a province on an arm of the Mekong south-southwest of Saigon, 2,850 adverse soldiers were wiped out, 5 aircraft grounded, 7 vehicles and 4 cannons destroyed and 2 vessels sunk. In the two northernmost provinces, northwest of Hue, the enemy losses were 500 casualties, 7 planes downed and 29 vehicles wrecked. Besides, in December past, the persuasion work among puppet troops proved very fruitful: 600 new recruits joined the resistance in Tra Vinh province and 1,560 in My Tho province.

SITUATION IN SAIGON

► GENERAL STRIKE

RECENTLY, workers of 118 TU organizations in Saigon decided to stage a general strike in support of the action of the bus drivers for employment, foreign press agencies reported. Since July 1969, the Saigon administration's closure of the State-run bus enterprise has left three million Saigonese without any public transport system and 400 out of 600 workers of the bus enterprise jobless. According to AFP, the strike was also to show the discontent of the people, first of all the workers and toiling people, at price spiralling as a result of the tax increase decreed by the Saigon puppet administration in October last.

The general strike started on the morning of January 7, 1970 as scheduled by the TUs, with the participation of one hundred per cent of workers in the following quarters as reported by AFP: workers of the Shell, Esso and Caltex filling stations, rice porters in Cholon, workers of the sugar refinery at Khanh Hoa and of the pharmaceutical product fac-

ories, petty employees of the Electricity and Waters Company. According to the preliminary figures released by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) the protest involved 70,000 workers in Saigon, for the sake of public utilities, the workers of the power plant and waterworks and the personnel holding key-posts in Saigon hospitals have not yet taken part in it, but they have declared they would join in should the claims of the workers not be met. The strike also dragged in a great number of dockers in Saigon, including the new harbour, and Lambretta drivers. It has paralyzed two war-servicing enterprises, the Saigon harbour and Tan Son Nhat airbase. The petrol-refuelling firms and many factories and workshops of the Saigon administration have been seriously affected.

On the night of Jan. 7, 1970, 200 representatives of these 118 TU organizations decided that the general strike should go on until their demand would be met. The action entered its second day on Jan. 8.

► STUDENTS AGAINST PRESSGANGING AND TERROR

AS already known, the Saigon puppet administration arrested 13 leaders of the students' movement in Saigon at the end of December on the grounds that they had participated in the "Christmas Concert for Peace in Viet Nam." This act was strongly criticized by public opinion, chiefly by 30,000 university students in Saigon. Because of public pressure, the puppet authorities released 11 students except Nguyen Van Thang, Secretary-General of the General Association of

Students. The Association then launched a new protest campaign with marathon teach-in-school strikes and hunger strikes, and sent to the students in the US a message calling for their support. This persevering action resulted in the release of Nguyen Van Thang on Jan. 1, 1970.

Meanwhile the students of the Science Faculty of the Saigon University protested against the imprisonment of 64 professors and

(Continued page 7)